

# Final Summary of Hebrews

## Overview

In our study of Hebrews, we have found several features.

1. The book has five warning sections that highlight different dangers believers face (Table 1, chart).
2. Each warning joins two closely related sections that we should compare.
3. In each pair of related sections, one member is much longer than the other, indicating the author’s emphasis.
4. These five pairs are not all on the same level, but are nested one inside another.

Warning	Danger	Follows	Precedes
2:1-4	Neglect	1:1-14, Christ <b>better</b> than angels	2:5-10:25, Christ <b>lower</b> than angels
3:7-4:13	Unbelief	3:1-6, Christ as <b>faithful</b> high priest (faith = belief)	4:14-10:25, Christ as <b>merciful</b> high priest
5:11-6:20	Stagnation	4:14-5:10, Christ is <b>like</b> other priests	7:1-10:25, Christ is <b>unlike</b> other priests
10:26-31	Willful Sin	1:1-10:25, The Person & Work of the <b>Son</b> of God	10:32-13:25, The Life of the <b>Sons</b> of God
12:18-29	Refusal to Hear	10:32-12:17, <b>Individual</b> godliness	13:1-25, Godliness with <b>Leaders</b>

*Table 1: The Warning Passages in Hebrews in order of occurrence*

Figure 1 (chart) summarizes these relations, and the OT passages cited in each.<sup>1</sup>

Effective Bible teaching integrates exposition and exhortation, facts and application. “Doctrine” must lead to “reproof, correction, instruction in righteousness” (2 Tim 3:16). Paul’s letters usually start with doctrine (e.g., Rom 1-11, Eph 1-3), followed by practical

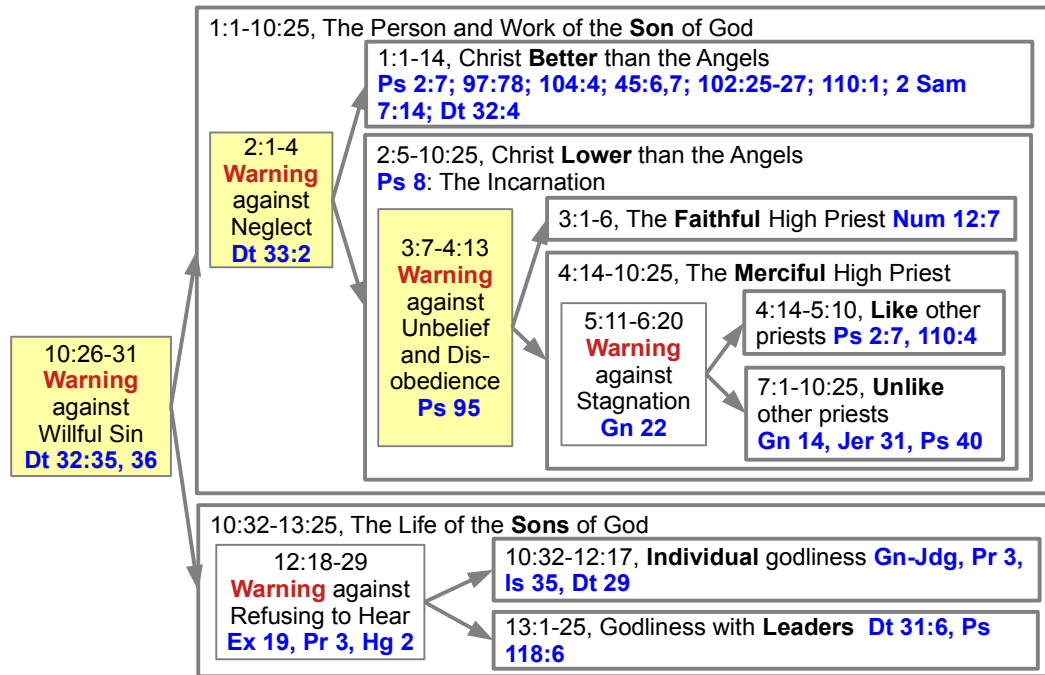


Figure 1: Contrasts integrated by Warnings

exhortation (Rom 12-16, Eph 4-6). Here, the applications (warnings) come between the members of their comparisons, though the highest level comparison does place a special emphasis on application at the end.

<sup>1</sup> The references are to explicit citations or direct quotations. There are many more indirect allusions.

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To summarize the book, we'll look at each comparison, and see how it relates to the warning that ties it together. As Figure 1 shows, the lowest level branches occur later, so we'll work from the back of the book toward the beginning. This process will let us build up the overall argument.

First, let's recall the likely setting. The emperor Claudius expelled many Jews, including Paul's friends Aquila and Priscilla, from Rome (Acts 18:2). Roman history suggests that this edict was the result of protests against Jews who believed in Jesus as Messiah. The letter appears to be written to a church in Rome, consisting mostly of Messianic Jews, that had experienced this persecution (10:32-34). Now, under Nero, pressure is increasing again. The believers are tempted to blend back into the unbelieving synagogues to avoid trouble. The writer, a former leader of the congregation, urges them that they did the right thing to leave the unbelieving synagogue, because the Messiah has instituted a new order that makes the old obsolete.

## 10:32-13:25, The Life of the Sons of God

The purpose of our Lord's work, described in the first half of the book, is to "bring many sons unto glory" (2:10). The description of how these sons of God should live occupies a single comparison in 10:32-13:25, emphasizing their steadfastness in the face of persecution.

### The Comparison: Godliness Individually and with Leaders

Both sections of the comparison deal with principles of practical godliness. Both sections repeat many of the same principles, and during the course of our study I've tried in different ways to characterize their relation with each other (see note). It seems best to see the second section, not as contrasting with the first, but as adding something to it. The key word of the first section is "faith," and the focus is on our individual relation to the Lord and how that should reflect itself in our conduct. The section does talk about our relation to one another (12:12-17), but our responsibilities there are reciprocal. The second section, in ch. 13, is marked by the phrase "them that have the rule over you," "your leaders." Now our godliness is not just an individual response to God, but involves our relation to the local church (Figure 2, chart). Godliness is not just individual, but corporate, and both are necessary. Recall the pattern of Acts 2. The Christian life begins with an individual response:

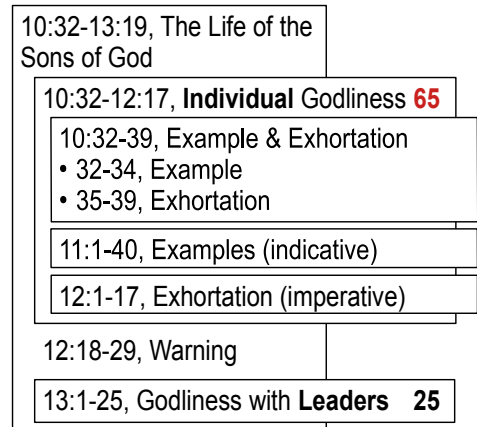


Figure 2: Structure of Hebrews 10:32-13:19 (with lengths of paired sections in verses)

Act 2:41 Then they that gladly received his word were baptized: and the same day there were added unto them about three thousand souls.

That individual response led to their involvement in the activities of the corporate church, under the authority of the apostles:

Act 2:42 And they continued stedfastly in the apostles' doctrine and fellowship, and in breaking of bread, and in prayers.

If we neglect the need for individual faith toward God, we end up with the view that church membership saves us. If we neglect the need for appropriate relations in a church structure, the

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gifts have no matrix within which to function. We will see this supplementary relationship between the two parts of a comparison again in our summary.

The section on individual godliness is more than twice as long as the second half, and also contains much more emphasis on the OT. Our individual response to God is the foundation without which all the church structure in the world is useless.

### 12:18-29, Warning: Don't Refuse to Hear

Both parts of the comparison emphasize God's revelation to us. In the first section on individual godliness, a family of words describes God's witness to us:

Heb. 11:1 Now faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen. 2 For by it the elders obtained a good **report**. ... 4 By faith Abel offered unto God a more excellent sacrifice than Cain, by which he **obtained witness** that he was righteous, ... 5 By faith Enoch was translated that he should not see death; and was not found, because God had translated him: for before his translation he had this **testimony**, that he pleased God. ... 12:1 Wherefore seeing we also are compassed about with so great a cloud of **witnesses**, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which doth so easily beset us, and let us run with patience the race that is set before us, ...

In the second section, the leaders "speak unto you the word of God" (13:7).

The warning in 12:18-29 presents the readers' choice as two mountains. At Mount Sinai, Israel refused to hear the word of God, as the unbelieving synagogue continues to do, Mount Zion represents the church, where we boldly enter the presence of God through the work of our Mediator. So it is natural that the integrating warning should urge us,

Heb. 12:25 See that ye refuse not him that speaketh.

### 4:14-10:25 The Merciful High Priest

The lowest-level comparison describing the work of our Savior presents him as a "merciful high priest," in keeping with the purpose of his incarnation,

Heb. 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a **merciful** and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God,

We'll discuss the "faithful" part later. Our current section begins reminding us of his mercy:

Heb 4:16 Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain **mercy**, and find grace to help in time of need.

### The Comparison: A High Priest Like, yet Unlike Others

This section is bounded by two similar paragraphs, exhorting the readers to hold fast and draw near (4:14-16; 10:19-25). Between these exhortations, the writer explains first how our Lord is similar to other priests, then how he is different (Figure 3, chart).

4:14-10:25 A Merciful High Priest	
4:14-16, Opening: Hold Fast & Draw Near	
5:1-10, <b>Similarities</b> to other Priests	10
5:11-6:20, <b>Warning</b> : Stagnation	
7:1-10:18, <b>Differences</b> from other Priests	87
10:19-25, Closing: Draw Near & Hold Fast	

Figure 3: The Merciful High Priest

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The discussion of similarities is only 10 verses, and compares the Messiah to OT priests in three ways, chiasmically arranged. Both our Lord and the Levites

- have the *mission* of reconciling sinful people to a holy God (5:1, 9),
- must *identify* with the people whom they represent (5:1-3, 7-8), and
- must be *appointed* by someone else to their priestly office (5:4, 5-6).

Most of the discussion, and the largest low-level division of the book, centers on how our Lord is different from other priests (7:1-10:18). The distinction between our Lord's priesthood and that of the Levitical priests has two marks: he serves in a different order (τάξις G5010) and according to a different covenant (διαθήκη G1214) (Figure 4). The *order* emphasizes the internal structure of the priesthood, considered as a system. The *covenant* looks beyond the system to the authority by which it is established. Our Lord's *order*,

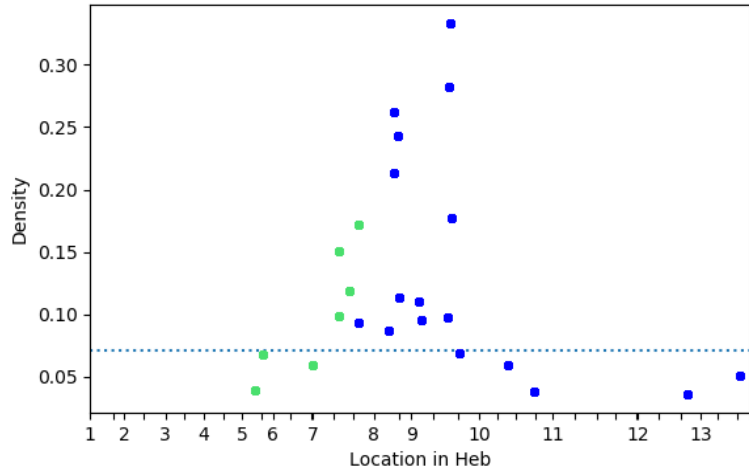


Figure 4: The *Order* and *Covenant* of our Lord's Priesthood

unlike that of the Levites, combines kingship and priesthood in one, and is not vulnerable to death, for it is guaranteed by God's promise. His *covenant* gives him access to the heavenly sanctuary, unlike the earthly one in which levitical priests minister. This theme leads to an extensive exposition of Jeremiah 31.

A critical feature of this new covenant is that Christ has replaced the repeated sacrifices of the Old Covenant with a single final sacrifice. Here's the writer's summary:

Heb. 10:11 And every priest standeth daily ministering and offering oftentimes the same sacrifices, **which can never take away sins**: 12 But this man, after he had offered **one sacrifice for sins for ever**, sat down on the right hand of God;

This emphasis on the change in covenant reflects the theme of this whole section of a "merciful" high priest. "Mercy" ἔλεος G1656 corresponds to the OT term רחם H2617, reflecting God's loyal love, which manifests itself most clearly in his covenants with his people. As a merciful priest, he institutes the New Covenant, which reveals God's loyal love in its fullest form.

### 5:11-6:20, Warning: Don't Stagnate.

The warning that integrates the discussion of how our Lord is both like and unlike other priests urges the readers not to stagnate in their spiritual lives. They need to leave the principles of the doctrine of Christ and go on unto maturity. This warning is particularly appropriate in light of the temptation they face. Their understanding appears to be frozen at the basic teachings of 6:1, 2,

Heb. 6:1 Therefore leaving the principles of the doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not laying again the foundation of repentance from dead works, and of faith toward God, 2 Of the doctrine of baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrection of the dead, and of eternal judgment.

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There is nothing distinctively Christian in any of these six items. These were all common ground between church and synagogue. To avoid conflict, the Roman believers are tempted to stop with these principles and merge back into the unbelieving synagogue to avoid coming persecution.

But such stagnation in their lives is inconsistent with the tremendous change that God instituted in sending his Son as the Merciful high priest, to offer one final sacrifice for sin for ever, inaugurate the New Covenant, and make it possible for God's people to enter into God's rest. To follow him, they must leave behind the principles they share with Judaism and go on to maturity.

## 2:5-10:25, Christ's Work while Lower than the Angels

The writer joins this discussion of the merciful high priest with a description of the faithful high priest. This section begins with an exposition of Psalm 8 (Figure 5, chart). This Psalm describes the place of the human being in God's creation, and the writer concludes from it that our Lord is a man, therefore lower than the angels.

Psa. 8:5 For thou hast made him a little lower than the angels, and hast crowned him with glory and honour.

2:5-10:25 Christ <b>Lower</b> than the Angels	177
2:5-18 Introduction from Psalm 8	
3:1-6 <b>Faithful</b> High Priest	6
3:7-4:13 <i>Warning: Unbelief &amp; Disobedience</i>	26
4:14-10:25 <b>Merciful</b> High Priest	131
4:14-5:10 <b>Like</b> other Priests	13
5:11-6:20 <i>Warning: Stagnation</i>	24
7:1-10:25 <b>Unlike</b> other Priests	94

Figure 5: Christ's Work while Lower than the Angels

## The Comparison: A Faithful and Merciful High Priest

The writer quotes the Psalm to show that our Lord, who from all eternity was better than the angels, became lower than the angels. His purpose (2:10) was to "bring[] many sons to glory" by delivering sinful people from bondage to Satan.

Heb. 2:14 Forasmuch then as the children are partakers of flesh and blood, he also himself likewise took part of the same; that through death he might destroy him that had the power of death, that is, the devil; 15 And deliver them who through fear of death were all their lifetime subject to bondage. 16 For verily he took not on him the nature of angels; but he took on him the seed of Abraham.

The writer summarizes our Lord's work under the picture of a priest:

Heb. 2:17 Wherefore in all things it behoved him to be made like unto his brethren, that he might be a **merciful** and faithful high priest in things pertaining to God,

We have already considered his role as a merciful high priest. His faithfulness, in 3:1-6, is compared with that of Moses, declared in Num 12:7 to be "faithful in all his house." The discussion of his faithfulness leads therefore to the household over which Christ is faithful:

Heb. 3:5 And Moses verily was faithful in all his house, as a servant, for a testimony of those things which were to be spoken after; 6 But Christ as a son over his own house; whose house are we, if we hold fast the confidence and the rejoicing of the hope firm unto the end.

His *faithfulness* emphasizes that he carried out the work that the Father sent him to do. That faithfulness unfolds as he willingly lays down his life to ratify the New Covenant by which God's mercy is conveyed to us, making him also the *merciful* high priest.

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The emphasis is on “merciful,” occupying 131 verses against 6 for his faithfulness, but the mercy rests upon his faithfulness. In order to bring us God’s mercy, he must be faithful to his Father. This relation between his faithfulness and his mercy recalls the relation in ch. 10-13 between our individual faith and our relation to the church. The second builds on the first.

There are two other similarities between this comparison and that in 10-13.

- “Faith” vocabulary in Hebrews is prominent in the first section of both comparisons (Figure 6).
- Just as the section on the merciful high priest emphasizes the priestly order under which he ministers, the final section on godliness in relation to church leaders is focused on the church order that our Lord has established.

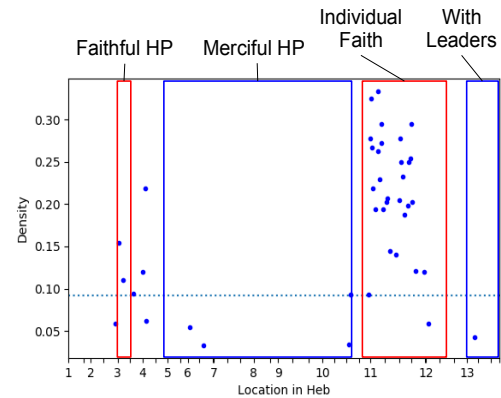


Figure 6: Words for "faith, believe" (πιστ\*)

### 3:7-4:13, Warning: Believe and Obey

In Greek, “faithful” πιστός G4103 and “believe” πιστεύω G4100 are closely related, and the writer integrates his comparison by exhorting his readers to follow their Lord’s example and believe in God’s promises.

The warning takes the form of a detailed exposition of Psalm 95, which itself recalls Israel’s sin in Numbers 14, when they refused to enter the promised land. The writer describes this sin with two words that our version translates identically (chart):

Heb. 3:18 And to whom sware he that they should not enter into his rest, but to them that **believed not ἀπειθέω G544** [were disobedient]? 19 So we see that they could not enter in because of **unbelief ἀπιστία G570**.

The second term here is literally “unbelief”; the first is more accurately translated “were disobedient.” Neither term appears in Psalm 95, but both come from the LXX of Numbers 14:

Num 14:11 And the LORD said unto Moses, How long will this people provoke me? and how long will it be ere they **believe πιστεύω** me, for all the signs which I have shewed among them?

Num. 14:43 For the Amalekites and the Canaanites are there before you, and ye shall fall by the sword: because ye are turned away from the LORD [**disobeying ἀπειθέω** him LXX], therefore the LORD will not be with you.

We tend to contrast belief and obedience, but in the NT they are very close, e.g.,

John 3:36 He that **believeth πιστεύω** on the Son hath everlasting life: and he that believeth not **ἀπειθέω [disobeyeth]** the Son shall not see life; but the wrath of God abideth on him.

So the writer begins his warning with one of these verbs, and ends with the other. At the start, “unbelief” builds on “faithful” πιστός G4103 in Heb 3:1-6:

Heb. 3:12 Take heed, brethren, lest there be in any of you an evil heart of **unbelief ἀπιστία**, in departing from the living God.

At the end, he emphasizes disobedience:

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Heb. 4:11 Let us labour therefore to enter into that rest, lest any man fall after the same example of unbelief **ἀπειθεία [disobedience]**.

While the root does not appear in the “merciful” section, that section does emphasize our Lord’s obedience to his Father:

Heb. 5:8 Though he were a Son, yet learned he obedience ὑπακοή G5218 by the things which he suffered;

Our Savior was faithful and merciful. So we, like him, are to believe and obey.

## 1:1-10:25, The Person and Work of the Son of God

The writer adds another short comparison to what he has already presented.

### Comparison: Our Lord’s Person and Work

In ch. 2-10, the writer describes at great length (177 verses) our Lord’s Work: *what he did* while, according to Psalm 8, he was “*lower than the angels.*” Chapter 1 supplements this with a much briefer (14vv) discussion of his Person: *who our Lord is*, showing that he is “*better than the angels*” (Table 2, chart). Chapter 1 presents this distinction in two ways (the rows of Table 2): an absolute

		Time in View	
		Eternally	After Incarnation
Distinction of Heb 1 from Heb 2-10	Absolute: Deity	1:3a being ... upholding ... (present → ongoing state)	1:3b when he had ... sat down ... (aorist → specific event)
	In Relation to Angels: Better	1:10 Thou, Lord in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth	1:6 when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world ...

*Table 2: The Person of our Lord in Hebrews 1*

statement about his person, and his position relative to the angels. It develops these themes from two temporal perspectives: his eternal nature, and the position he now holds as a result of the incarnation (the columns of Table 2).

The first four verses describe two facets of who our Lord is, distinguished by verb tenses. Present tenses describe his eternal, ongoing relation to the Father, something that never changes:

Heb. 1:3a Who **being** the brightness of his glory, and the express image of his person, and **upholding** all things by the word of his power,

Aorists describe his exaltation following his work as our brother and high priest:

Heb. 1:3b when he had by himself purged our sins, sat down on the right hand of the Majesty on high;

The rest of the chapter cites numerous texts from the OT to show that, both in eternity past and as a result of his finished work, he is better than the angels. In eternity past, he is the Lord who created everything:

Heb. 1:10 And, Thou, Lord, in the beginning hast laid the foundation of the earth; and the heavens are the works of thine hands:

But after becoming lower than the angels, he has now been exalted far above them:

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Heb. 1:6 And again, when he bringeth in the firstbegotten into the world, he saith, And let all the angels of God worship him.

The humiliation of ch. 2-10 is thus temporary, required for him to be our kinsman-redeemer (Figure 7). Before and after that work, he is far above the angels, the Son of God.<sup>2</sup>

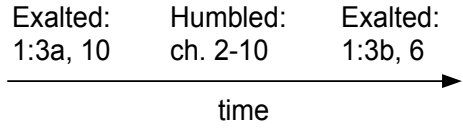


Figure 7: Chronology of Hebrews 1-10

### 2:1-5, Warning: Don't Neglect

The warning grows out of the Lord's exalted position, described in ch. 1. The writer recalls a common Jewish interpretation of Deut 33:2 and Ps 68:17, endorsed also by Paul in Gal 3:19 and Stephen in Acts 7:38, 53, that the law was given through angels ("he came with ten thousands of his saints"). That law carried severe penalties for neglect. It is even more serious to neglect one who is far above the angels.

Heb. 2:2 For if the word spoken by angels was stedfast, and every transgression and disobedience received a just recompence of reward; 3 How shall we escape, if we neglect so great salvation; which at the first began to be spoken by the Lord, and was confirmed unto us by them that heard him;

The phrase "spoken by the Lord" (2:3) integrates the two elements of the comparison. "Lord," κύριος G2962, is the standard LXX translation of the personal name of God, יהוה. In times past God used intermediaries to communicate with physical people, but now the Lord himself, as a man, has spoken directly to us. How dare we neglect such a one?

## ch. 1-13, The Son and the Sons.

We have worked through the comparisons from the bottom, and arrived at two major sections. The first describes the person and work of the Son of God, while the second describes our lives as sons of God. Through 10:29, the word "son" refers almost entirely to our Lord, but after that point it always refers to believers (Figure 8, chart).

In the light of the structure that we have observed, the warning that integrates these two halves (10:26-31) emerges as the central focus of the book. Read in the light of this structure, it summarizes everything we have seen.

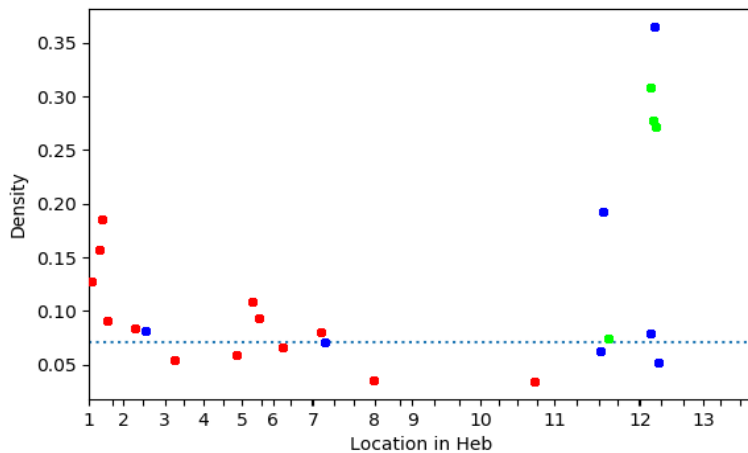


Figure 8: "Son" = *Christ*, believers (*plural, singular*)

<sup>2</sup> Many commentators render "a little" in Ps 8:5 temporally, "for a little while," reflecting the temporary nature of his humiliation. The Greek word βραχύς (G1024) used by the LXX can indeed bear this meaning, though the underlying Hebrew does not. But the insight is certainly consistent with the writer's overall argument. The exalted Person of ch. 1 both precedes and follows the redemptive Work of the incarnate Messiah in ch. 2-10.



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**10:26 For if we sin wilfully after that we have received the knowledge of the truth,**—Here we anticipate the exhortations coming in 10b-13, encouraging us to stand fast, encourage one another, and be faithful to the church in the midst of persecution.

**there remaineth no more sacrifice for sins,**—With the change in covenant, we can no longer bring a sacrifice. That order has gone for ever, now that Christ has offered one final sacrifice for sins (10:12).<sup>3</sup>

**27 But a certain fearful looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour the adversaries.**—This verse is likely inspired by Isa 26:11 LXX (Cockerill), describing God's great final judgment on the world (chart):

Is. 26:11 LORD, when thy hand is lifted up, they will not see: but they shall see, and be ashamed for their **envy** at the people; yea, the **fire** of thine **enemies shall devour** them.

This verse recalls as well our Lord's warning about the sheep and the goats:

Mat 25:41 Then shall he say also unto them on the left hand, Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels:

**28 He that despised Moses' law died without mercy under two or three witnesses: 29 Of how much sorer punishment, suppose ye, shall he be thought worthy, who hath trodden under foot the Son of God, and hath counted the blood of the covenant, wherewith he was sanctified, an unholy thing, and hath done despite unto the Spirit of grace?**—Here he draws out the implications of the contrast between the old and new covenants in ch. 4-10.

**30 For we know him that hath said, Vengeance belongeth unto me, I will recompense, saith the Lord. And again, The Lord shall judge his people.**—He draws his conclusion from Deut 32:35, 36.

**31 It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.**

God has sent his son to provide a complete salvation (ch. 1-10) for all who will submit to him (ch. 10-13). How wonderful our hope if we follow him, but how dreadful the consequences if we spurn his grace and turn from him.

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<sup>3</sup> Cockerill argues persuasively that this verse is not an allusion to Numbers 15, but rather refers to the completion of the Levitical sacrifices for sin in the work of Christ, so that we can no longer try to atone for our sin by bringing another sacrifice.

## Notes

### The Nature of the Final Comparison in 10:32-13:25

During the course of the exposition, I have wrestled with the nature of the comparison in this section. The distinction between a focus on the Son in ch. 1-10a and a focus on the sons in 10b-13 is clear (Figure 8), and both before and after the warning in 12:18-29 the writer gives specific exhortations to godliness. In fact, many themes are common to both sections, including recollection of the past persecution (10:32-39; 13:3), warnings against false teaching (12:15; 13:9) and sexual impurity (12:16; 13:4), the importance of God's message (the witnesses in ch. 11; teachers in 13:7), and the need for love among the brethren (12:12-13; 13:1). What distinguishes the section before the warning from the one that follows?

Originally, I suggested that the first half focused on living in the world, while the second dealt with our life in the church, emphasized by "them that have the rule over you." But detailed study of 12:12-17 shows strong echoes of church principles from Matthew 18. And OT examples such as Sarah conceiving seed, or Abraham offering Isaac, don't have much to do with contending with the world.

Those observations led me to characterize the sections chronologically, presenting past examples (OT saints) before the warning and current examples (your leaders) after. But that doesn't really work either. The first section begins with a recollection of the church's own faithfulness during the Claudian persecution (10:32-39), while the first paragraph of the second, summarized by "remember them that have the rule over you," suggests that he is invoking the example of some leaders who have passed away.

In the end, the relation between the two, like that between the faithful and merciful high priest, is supplementary, the second section adding to the first. The first section sets forth principles of individual godliness. Where they involve other believers, the relation is reciprocal (12:12-17). The second section adds the need to function within the structure of the local church, recognizing the distinctive role of "them that have the rule over you."

### The Relation between Mercy and Covenant

Heb 4:14-10:25 ascribes the inauguration of the New Covenant to the work of our High Priest under his character as Merciful. What is the connection?

"Mercy" ἔλεος G1656 corresponds to חסד H2617, God's loyal love, which manifests itself most clearly in his covenants with his people. Thirteen vv (Deut. 7:9, 12; 1 Sam. 20:8; 1 Kings 8:23; Is. 54:10; 55:3; Psa. 25:10; 89:28; 106:45; Dan. 9:4; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; 2 Chr. 6:14) combine חסד and ברית, far more than combine ברית with any other of the key words from Ex 34:6. Seven of these vv use the two in the expression שמר ברית והסד (Deut. 7:9, 12; 1 Kings 8:23; Dan. 9:4; Neh. 1:5; 9:32; 2 Chr. 6:14). Example:

Deut. 7:9 Know therefore that the LORD thy God, he is God, the faithful God, which **keepeth covenant and mercy** with them that love him and keep his commandments to a thousand generations;

Which comes first?

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The OT mentions covenants before **חסד**. God enters covenant with Noah (Gen 9) and Abraham (Gen 15:18; 17:2); the first mention of God's **חסד** is to Abraham's nephew Lot in 19:19, and Eliezer's prayer for guidance in 24:12, both after God's covenant with Abraham. Joseph also experiences God's **חסד**, Gen 39:21. It seems at first as though the covenant comes first, yielding **חסד** as a consequence. This may be true with people:

1Sam. 20:8 Therefore thou shalt deal **kindly** with thy servant; **for** thou hast brought thy servant into a **covenant** of the LORD with thee: [cf. 18:3].

But this would be misleading. Recall the expression, "keep covenant and mercy." Ps 89:28 also uses these three words of God's covenant with David, but in different syntax:

Psa. 89:28 My **mercy** will I **keep** for him for evermore, and my **covenant** shall stand fast with him.

There's a reason Ethan did not use the conventional phrase. Anticipating the destruction of the monarchy by Babylon, he goes on to observe:

Psa. 89:38 But thou hast cast off and abhorred, thou hast been wroth with thine anointed. 39 Thou hast **made void the covenant of thy servant**: thou hast profaned his crown by casting it to the ground.

That experience leads him to question:

Psa. 89:49 Lord, **where are thy former lovingkindnesses**, which thou swarest unto David in thy truth?

77:9 asks similar question, extending it to God's **חנות** and **רחמים**, other attributes from Ex 34:6:

Psa. 77:8 Is his mercy **חסד** clean gone for ever? doth his promise fail for evermore? 9 Hath God forgotten to be gracious **חנות**? hath he in anger shut up his tender mercies **רחמים**?

But I have not found a text that asserts that God has made void his lovingkindness. Whatever happens to the covenant, God's lovingkindness is eternal, and that is the theme of Ethan's poem:

Psa. 89:1 I will sing of the **mercies** of the LORD for ever: with my mouth will I make known thy faithfulness to all generations. 2 For I have said, **Mercy** shall be built up for ever: thy faithfulness shalt thou establish in the very heavens.

And the next book of Psalms introduces the refrain that echoes to the end,

Psa. 100:5 For the LORD is good; **his mercy is everlasting**; and his truth endureth to all generations.

Psa. 103:17 But **the mercy of the LORD is from everlasting to everlasting** upon them that fear him, and his righteousness unto children's children;

Psa. 106:1 Praise ye the LORD. O give thanks unto the LORD; for he is good: **for his mercy endureth for ever.**

After all, according to Ex 34:6, **חסד** is part of God's name, an expression of who he is. He has always been thus (Ps 103:17); covenants are the outgrowth of that loyal love. They may come and go, but he never changes. God is love.

Bring this all, and Ps 89 in particular, to focus on our Savior. God's judgment on him brought an end to the Old Covenant. But it affirmed his lovingkindness, his mercy, and it was as our merciful high priest that our Lord inaugurated the new covenant, one that will never end.